

6.02: Public Hearing: Consider the Preliminary Plat for Emerald Estates, Located along 181st Avenue, West of Xenolith Street (Project No. 24-123); Case of Landform Professional Services, LLC

Public Hearing

Chairperson Gengler called the public hearing to order at 7:12 p.m.

Presentation

Senior Planner Anderson presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the Preliminary Plat, contingent upon compliance with staff's review comments.

Commissioner Bauer commented that it would seem if they followed the recommendation of the County to construct a road that would impact the buildable area of the lots. He commented that separate driveways would seem to be more feasible.

Senior Planner Anderson confirmed that is accurate. He stated that if there were a service road, lots 12 and 13 may very well be rendered not buildable.

Citizen Input

Eric Luth, Landform, spoke in representation of the applicant. He stated that a memorandum was included in the packet which responded to the comments of the County.

Chairperson Gengler asked if the applicant has looked at the suggestion for pairing driveways.

Mr. Luth stated that because these are custom-built, they would prefer to allow property owners to choose the location of their driveway and noted that typically there is a spacing of 100 feet between driveways. He stated that they do not see this as an issue of safety as placing two driveways right next to each other creates more of a safety issue.

Commissioner Anderson commented that safety is extremely important on a 55-mph roadway and referenced the comments from the County. He asked why they could not use a frontage road to connect the driveways. He stated that he does not like the idea of 13 additional driveways on this road.

Mr. Luth replied that a frontage road would severely compromise lots 12 and 13 and adding a frontage road would add more impervious surface that would need to be treated. He stated that would also require mass grading, where they are attempting to build into the lots individually to preserve the natural environment as much as possible. He stated that properly spacing driveways per MnDOT rules is safer than collecting everything into one location where vehicles would enter and exit at one time.

Frank Scharber, 17820 Gibbon Street NW, commented that he lives directly south of this property and had concern with the narrow lots. He commented that there are a lot of wetlands and hills that

drain into the wetlands. He asked if there was an environmental study to ensure the septic systems would not impact the wetlands.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that any installed septic system needs to meet the state requirements as well as requirements of City Code to ensure septic tanks are pumped every three years with an inspection to ensure everything is functioning properly.

Motion by Commissioner Peters, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, to close the public hearing.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Peters, Hunt, Anderson, and Bauer. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Heineman and VanScoy.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

Commission Business

Commissioner Hunt recognized that there were concerns with safety in the prior review. He was unsure that the best option would be a frontage road as that would severely impact the development.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that the County provided two sets of review comments, related to the sketch plan and this case. He noted that the second set of comments were a reiteration of the previous comments. He stated that the County stopped short of saying it was a requirement as there is nothing in their policies that state that shall be done. He stated that City engineering staff deferred to the comments of Anoka County.

Commissioner Peters commented that he lives on a road that has a speed limit of 55 mph and there are driveways on that road that do not pair and there are no issues. He commented that this road does seem narrow and with the amount of development that will most likely occur in that area, perhaps the road would be widened on the other side as part of that development. He stated that there are many 55 mph roads in Ramsey with driveways.

Commissioner Anderson commented that he could not support this proposal because of his concerns with safety. He stated that the City needs to ensure that development occurs in a safe manner for those that live here and those that drive on the roads.

Chairperson Gengler commented that the turnarounds are helpful as people will not be backing out of the driveways. She commented that if this area were to become more populated there would need to be additional improvements as part of that future development.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that staff did review the average daily trips (ADT) for this road, which is about 3,000 and therefore is on the very low end. He also provided details on crash data noting that the majority were single-vehicle accidents. He stated that there is the same scenario to the east and west and therefore it did not seem that adding 13 lots would cause an issue of safety.

Commissioner Bauer stated that while he understands the concern of Commissioner Anderson, these lots meet all Code requirements and there is nothing that would require shared access or frontage roads, therefore he would have a hard time denying this as it meets all requirements.

Motion by Commissioner Peters, seconded by Commissioner Bauer, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #25-003 Approving the Preliminary Plat for Emerald Estates, contingent upon compliance with staff's review comments.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Peters, Bauer, and Hunt. Voting No: Commissioner Anderson. Absent: Commissioners Heineman and VanScoy.

DRAFT